DESIGNERS AND ENGRAVERS OF TYPE.

BY WILLIAM E. LOY.

NO. X.—SAMUEL SAWYER KILBURN.

THE past generation produced a large number of active and capable designers and engravers of type. As the records of their lives and labors have not been kept, and as their associates are generally gone, it is a difficult matter to secure the necessary facts. There are still living in Boston a few persons connected with type founding and printing who remember Samuel Sawyer Kilburn, although his death took place in 1864. He is remembered as one of the early employes of the Boston Type Foundry, having taken a position in that establishment when the foundry was located on Salem street, before it was burned in 1825. His connection with type founding, and particularly with designing and cutting punches, was so purely accidental that an account of his career, however deficient it may be in the matter of details, cannot but prove interesting.

SAMUEL S. KILBURN.

Mr. Kilburn was born in December, 1799, at Buckland, Massachusetts, a poor country hill town, very little larger now than at the time of his birth. His father was a farmer, and the subject of this sketch being the eldest of a family of seven children, he was, at the early age of eleven, apprenticed to a blacksmith in a distant town. Here he served out the full seven years of his apprenticeship, and during that long period he never had an opportunity to return home or see his family or friends. After the expiration of his apprenticeship he never worked a day at the trade, though for many years engaged in a related occupation. His first employment was as superintendent of a manufactory of wool cards and other machinery at Lancaster, Massachusetts. While thus engaged he made the acquaintance of Timothy H. Carter, who conducted a large publishing, binding and printing business at that place, the firm being Carter, Andrews & Co.

Mr. Carter was interested in establishing the first type foundry in Boston, which was incorporated under the title of the Boston Type and Stereotype Foundry. In those early days John Gorham Rogers was agent; James Conner, later founder of the Conner type foundry of New York, was at the head of the stereotype department; and Michael Dalton, later of the Dickinson type foundry, was in the type-casting department. The mechanical ingenuity of Mr. Kilburn had impressed Mr. Carter, so when the new type foundry required the services of a moldmaker and general machinist, he induced him to come to Boston, where in due time he was installed. In a short time he added to his other duties that of matrix fitter, and his services soon became invaluable.

One day the publishing interests of Mr. Carter demanded the cutting of punches for a set of characters for printing some books in the Hawaiian language, and punch cutters were not numerous in America at that time. When Mr. Kilburn was consulted he looked into the work attentively, and reported that he would like to have an opportunity to try it. His first attempt at cutting a punch was so completely successful that his services were more in demand than ever, and from that time he began to give his attention more and more to that branch of the type founding business. He worked without drawings or patterns of any kind, and proceeded with the entire alphabet thus, keeping the proportions and weights of line in perfect balance, so correct was his eye. In his early career he had no assistant, and he thus came to cut the punch, drive it, fit the matrix, and then cast the type in a mold of his own making.

At this late day it is impossible to record a list of the faces cut by Mr. Kilburn. He cut all the various roman, italic, title, and two-line letters produced by the Boston Type Foundry in the early years of its career; and later, when it became one of the great producing foundries of the country, he enlarged the scope of his work. The series which is best remembered by printers and type founders a generation ago, and which marks a departure in letter designing from the conventional Antiques, is the Tuscan Antique. This was cut on steel by Mr. Kilburn in five sizes, and has been copied by many other foundries.

Close application to the exacting work of cutting punches at one time affected Mr. Kilburn's eyesight, and he retired to a farm near Boston. Obtaining relief he was urged to return to his former occupation. With the exception of this respite, he followed the art and craft until a short time before his death in 1864. His life was thus a busy one, and the product of his application went far in establishing the reputation of the old Boston Type Foundry.

THE EMPLOYING PRINTER.

CONDUCTED BY CADILLAC.

This department is published in the interests of the employing printers' organizations. Brief letters upon subjects of interest to employers, and the doings of master printers' societies are especially welcome.

AS TO MUNICIPALITY-OWNED PRINTING PLANTS.

It has been a matter of great surprise to the writer to view the indifference displayed by the employing printers, as a class, to the growing sentiment throughout the country in favor of municipal or State ownership of printing plants. It is not to be inferred, however, that this socialistic sentiment is of spontaneous or natural growth; rather it is due to the active propagation of the typographical unions. The wage-earning printers of the country have learned only too well that Uncle Sam is the most liberal and indulgent of employers. With the example of the Government Printing Office at the national capital before their eyes—that shelter for incompetents, and towering monument of a nation's wastefulness—they are inspired to work for a government-owned printing plant in every city in the land. They are well aware that the taxpayer is a patient beast, and if one can only once get astride his back there is little danger of losing one's grip thereafter.

The alleged success of the Boston municipal printing plant—I say alleged, because the Boston experiment is only yet in its infancy, and has not had time to become the prey of the political spoilsman, as it will undoubtedly do in time—seems to have spurred up the unions in different parts of the country to secure, if possible, similar institutions, and during the past month no less than half-a-dozen cities have been brought to my attention where such an agitation is being carried on, to say nothing of a number of States where the same ends are being sought on a larger scale.

It is time, if the employing printers wish to check this threatened inroad upon their business, that they wake up and do something to protect their own interests.

There is no more reason why municipalities should invest in printing plants to supply their own printing than there is why they should maintain soap factories to supply the soap used by their employes in their daily ablutions, or why they should establish potteries to supply the clay cuspidores for the use of the loafer-politicians indigenous to the municipal office.

The printing business is not a monopoly, like the right to run street cars, or to furnish a city with water or gas. In no city is there an absence of competition in the business. Indeed, I think it may be said with truth that in no other business is competition so keen and in no other department is the municipality so likely to get its wants supplied so near the actual first cost to produce. Hence, what need is there, from an economical standpoint, for the municipality to invade the realms of

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